



Asian Fortress Halloween House

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SUMMARY

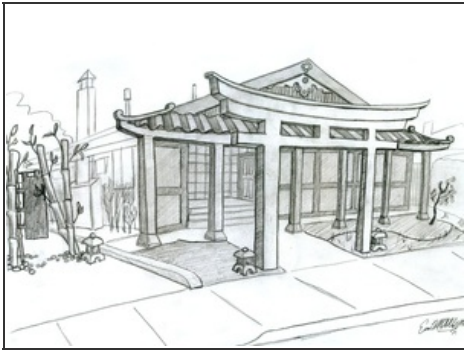
Anyone can make a ghoulish, scary, haunted Halloween house. Take your next Halloween house to the next level by focusing on creativity rather than just creepy-tivity. With some basic woodworking skills, some free cardboard supplies and a little bit of neighborly assistance, you can create an Asian fortress that will be the envy of all the Kung Fu masters.

Step 1 — Create a wooden structure to support the cardboard façade



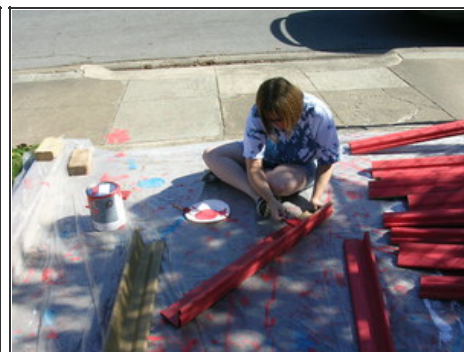
- Use 12–14 ft. 2X4s to create uprights for the structure and connect them together using 6–8 ft. 2X4s to make sure that you have a rigid frame.
- Consider adding stabilizing elements, such as bases for the uprights or a means of attaching the structure to the house. It is imperative that the structure be sturdy and strong and not have any possibility of falling or harming anyone.
- If you plan to reuse the structure, consider building it in sections that can be stored compactly and then brought back out and reassembled for future Halloween houses. For an example of how to store sections of a structure, check out [this video](#).

Step 2 — Design your fortress



- Search through books or online resources to locate a design that captivates you. There is a lot of beauty in Asian architecture, so find the elements that speak to you
- Sketch your ideas. Start with a sketch of your house and then use that as a starting point for sketching how your fortress will fit your particular house's shape.
- Consider using Photoshop to previsualize your masterpiece. Start by taking a picture of your house with the structure on it and then adding elements until it matches what's in your mind. This will serve as your blueprint for the rest of the project.

Step 3 — Collect materials



- Acquire materials to create the façade. There are lots of great sources of free, sturdy cardboard, including: bike stores (bike boxes), appliance stores (refrigerator or appliance boxes), cabinet makers (large 4X8 ft. sheets of cardboard) and carpet stores (long sturdy cardboard tubes).
- The cardboard shown here came from Eric's workplace. They got new office chairs and each of the chairs came in a large cardboard box.
- Other cardboard items that you might look for include mailing tubes and "L"-shaped cardboard pieces (found protecting the corners of appliances).
- For this house, deck footings from a removed deck, bare "trees" found by the side of the road and Asian-themed decor items from thrift stores were acquired.
- Choose paint colors that match your theme and purchase them at a local paint store.

Step 4 — Prepare and paint cardboard for façade



- Lay out the structure on the ground and trim the cardboard to fit.
- Using the sketch or previsualization as a guide, paint the cardboard to match your concept.
- While this can be done by yourself, I highly recommend involving friends and neighbors. We have Community Painting Days for our Halloween house. It adds to the fun and everyone can say they did part of the house. <http://www.albertzone.com/halloween/2011...>
- Let the painted components dry during the day and store them in a dry location until you are ready to put them on the house.

Step 5 — Attach the cardboard to the structure



- Erect the structure, securing it so that it will not fall. Using small screws, screw the cardboard pieces to the wooden structure.
- Keep a box cutter handy to trim away excess cardboard or to shape the cardboard around landscaping features.
- Note: Cardboard in wet conditions can sag or bend, so it is best if the façade is put up close to Halloween to minimize these effects.

Step 6 — Build roof overhang



- Acquire approximately 60 sturdy cardboard mailing tubes.
- Using a table saw, cut them each in half lengthwise.
- Screw them together, alternating their orientation to create a corrugated look (like a tile roof).
- Using the "L"-shaped cardboard pieces on both the house and on the offset supports (coming up from the deck footings), attach the roof sections securely.

Step 7 — Add additional elements



- To complete your scene, consider adding some of the following items:
- Poster tube bamboo. Tape poster tubes together end to end. Paint them yellow and then go back and add some brown highlights.
- Milk carton pagodas. Take jugs and cartons from milk or juice, cut them as you see here, paint them gray and then add a coat of stone fleck spray.
- Tissue paper cherry blossom trees. On some bare branches, take squares of white tissue paper, dip the middle of the square into glue and attach to the branches.

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